

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend claims 14, 19, 23 and 24 as follows.

1-13. (Cancelled)

14. (Currently Amended) A coin separating and sorting assembly comprising:
a separating wheel including at least one coin receiving aperture;
a wheel housing on which said separating wheel is supported, said wheel housing being oriented at an acute angle to a horizontal plane and comprising at least one sorting aperture which is sized to allow passage of a coin of a defined maximum diameter therethrough wherein the at least one coin receiving aperture selectively overlies the at least one sorting aperture;
a first coin support surface provided on the wheel housing; and,
a second coin support surface defined on the wheel housing wherein said second coin support surface is oriented approximately perpendicular to said first coin support surface.

15. (Original) The assembly of claim 14 wherein said separating wheel comprises a set of gear teeth and further comprising a motor having an output shaft operably connected to said gear teeth of said separating wheel for driving said separating wheel.

16. (Original) The assembly of claim 14 wherein said wheel housing

comprises a plurality of apertures, arranged in a size order.

17. (Original) The assembly of claim 16 wherein at least one of said apertures has a trailing edge with an angled surface.

18. (Original) The assembly of claim 14 wherein said wheel housing further comprises a central portion having a recessed area in an upper surface thereof.

19. (Currently Amended) A coin separating and sorting assembly comprising:
a separating wheel including at least one coin receiving aperture and a toroidal flange connected to said separating wheel and disposed radially outward of said at least one coin receiving aperture;

a wheel housing on which said separating wheel is supported, said wheel housing comprising at least one sorting aperture which is sized to allow passage of a coin of a defined maximum diameter therethrough wherein the at least one coin receiving aperture selectively overlies the at least one sorting aperture;

a first coin support surface provided on the wheel housing for supporting a face of an associated coin; and,

a second coin support surface defined on the wheel housing for supporting an edge of the associated coin.

20. (Original) The assembly of claim 19 wherein said leading edge of each of said plurality of apertures of said separating wheel has a thickness slightly greater than a thickness of a thickest coin meant to be sorted.

21. (Previously Presented) The assembly of claim 19 wherein each of said plurality of apertures in said separating wheel has a diameter large enough to accommodate a diameter of the largest coin meant to be sorted and wherein a diameter of the largest coin meant to be sorted is smaller than twice the diameter of the smallest diameter coin meant to be sorted so that the two of the smallest diameter ones of the coins meant to be sorted cannot fit into a single aperture.

22. (Original) The assembly of claim 19 wherein each of said plurality of apertures and said separating wheel has a trailing edge with a tapered surface that is smaller in thickness than is a thickness of a thinnest coin meant to be sorted in order to prevent two of the coins from becoming stacked in a single aperture.

23. (Currently Amended) A coin separating and sorting assembly comprising:
a separating wheel including at least one coin receiving aperture;
a wheel housing on which said separating wheel is supported, said wheel housing being oriented at an acute angle to a horizontal plane and comprising at least one sorting aperture;
a first coin support surface provided on the wheel housing; and,
a second coin support surface defined on the wheel housing, wherein a trailing edge of the at least one coin receiving aperture of the separating wheel is so shaped as to allow an associated coin held in said at least one coin receiving aperture to contact said second coin support surface before the associated coin reaches the at least one sorting aperture.

24. (Original) The assembly of claim 23 wherein said trailing edge has a tapered surface that is smaller in thickness than is a thickness of a thinnest coin meant to be sorted in order to prevent two of the coins from becoming stacked in a single aperture.

25. (Original) The assembly of claim 24 wherein said wheel housing comprises a plurality of apertures arranged in order of increasing size.

26. (Previously Presented) The assembly of claim 24 wherein a leading edge of said at least one coin receiving aperture of the separating wheel has a thickness slightly greater than a thickness of a thickest coin meant to be sorted.

27-33. (Cancelled)

34. (Currently Amended) A coin separating and sorting assembly comprising:
a separating member including at least one coin receiving aperture;
a housing, oriented at an acute angle to a horizontal plane, on which said separating member is movably supported, said housing comprising at least one coin sorting aperture, wherein said at least one coin receiving aperture selectively overlies said at least one coin sorting aperture;
a stationary coin support surface provided on said housing; and
a stationary coin rolling surface provided on said housing.

35. (Previously Presented) The assembly of claim 34 wherein said separating member comprises a plurality of spaced coin receiving apertures.

36. (Previously Presented) The assembly of claim 34 wherein said housing comprises a plurality of coin sorting apertures of different sizes, each coin sorting aperture being sized to allow a coin of a defined maximum diameter therethrough.

37. (Previously Presented) The assembly of claim 36 wherein said plurality of coin sorting apertures are spaced from each other.

38. (Previously Presented) The assembly of claim 36 wherein said plurality of coin sorting apertures each include a radially inner edge that is equidistant from a transverse axis of said housing.

39. (Previously Presented) The assembly of claim 38 wherein said plurality of coin sorting apertures each include a radially outer edge that is located successively further away from said axis, in a direction of movement of said separating member.

40. (Previously Presented) The assembly of claim 34 wherein said housing includes a transverse axis, said coin rolling surface is spaced from said axis and said coin support surface is located radially outwardly of said coin rolling surface.

41. (Previously Presented) The assembly of claim 40 wherein said separating member comprises a wheel.

42. (Previously Presented) A coin bank comprising:
- a coin hopper; and,
 - a coin separating and sorting assembly located beneath said coin hopper,
- said separating and sorting assembly comprising:
- a separating plate including a plurality of coin receiving apertures each having an identical shape and each including a substantially constant diameter and a toroidal flange of one piece with and extending away from a plane of said separating plate, and
 - a housing on which said separating plate is movably mounted, said housing including a wall with an upper portion, a lower portion and four coin sorting apertures located on the upper portion, one each for sorting associated dimes, pennies, nickels and quarters, wherein each of said coin receiving apertures selectively overlies each of said four coin sorting apertures whereby an associated coin to be sorted drops from a respective coin receiving aperture into an appropriately sized one of said four coin sorting apertures, and wherein each associated coin to be sorted moves toward an axis of rotation of said separating plate prior to each coin receiving opening overlying a first of the four coin sorting apertures.

43. (Previously Presented) The bank of claim 42 wherein said separating plate is rotatably mounted on said housing.

44. (Previously Presented) The bank of claim 43 further comprising a mechanism for rotating said separating plate on said housing.

45. (Previously Presented) The bank of claim 42 wherein said separating plate is toroidally shaped.

46. (Previously Presented) The bank of claim 45 wherein said separating plate includes a central opening which is larger in diameter than is a diameter of said at least one coin receiving aperture.

47. (Previously Presented) A coin separating and sorting assembly comprising:

a ring-shaped separating wheel including at least one coin receiving aperture and a toroidal flange extending away from a plane of said separating wheel; and,

a wheel housing on which said separating wheel is supported, said wheel housing including at least one coin sorting aperture.

48. (Previously Presented) The assembly of claim 47 wherein said separating wheel is rotatably mounted on said wheel housing.

49. (Previously Presented) The assembly of claim 48 further comprising a mechanism for rotating said separating wheel on said wheel housing.

50. (Previously Presented) The assembly of claim 47 wherein an inner periphery of said separating wheel includes at least one slot which is aligned with said

at least one coin receiving aperture to allow an edge of an associated coin to protrude therethrough.

51. (Previously Presented) The assembly of claim 50 wherein said separating wheel includes a central opening which is larger in radius than is a diameter of said at least one coin receiving aperture.

52. (Previously Presented) The assembly of claim 47 wherein said toroidal flange is located radially outward from said at least one coin receiving aperture.

53. (Previously Presented) The assembly of claim 47 wherein a plurality of spaced coin receiving apertures are defined in said separating wheel.

54. (Previously Presented) The assembly of claim 53 wherein a plurality of coin sorting apertures are defined in said wheel housing.

55. (Previously Presented) The assembly of claim 54 wherein said coin sorting apertures are spaced from each other.

56. (Currently Amended) A coin bank comprising:
a housing;
a coin separating and sorting assembly mounted in said housing, said assembly comprising:
a separating wheel including at least one coin receiving aperture,

a wheel housing on which said separating wheel is supported, said wheel housing comprising a plurality of coin sorting apertures of different sizes, each aperture being sized to allow passage of an associated coin of a defined maximum diameter therethrough, wherein said at least one coin receiving aperture of said separating wheel selectively overlies each of said plurality of coin sorting apertures to allow an associated coin to drop from said at least one coin receiving aperture into an appropriately sized one of said plurality of coin sorting apertures, wherein at least one of said plurality of coin sorting apertures includes a tapered wall;

a drawer slidably mounted in said housing; and

at least one coin tube being supported by said drawer and being removable therefrom.

57. (Currently Amended) A coin bank comprising:

a housing;

a coin separating and sorting assembly mounted in said housing, said assembly comprising:

a separating wheel including at least one coin receiving aperture,

a wheel housing on which said separating wheel is supported, said wheel housing comprising a coin sorting face including a plurality of coin sorting apertures of different sizes, each aperture being sized to allow passage of an associated coin of a defined maximum diameter therethrough, wherein said coin sorting face is located directly beneath said separating wheel such that said at least one coin receiving aperture intermittently overlies each of said plurality of coin sorting apertures; and

a plurality of coin tubes, each of which is in communication with a respective one of said plurality of coin sorting apertures, said plurality of coin tubes being selectively held in a drawer slidably mounted to said housing ~~and being disposed at an acute angle in relation to a horizontal plane.~~

58. (Previously Presented) A coin bank comprising:

a housing;

a coin separating and sorting assembly mounted in said housing, said assembly comprising:

a separating wheel including at least one coin receiving aperture, and

a wheel housing on which said separating wheel is supported, said wheel housing comprising a coin sorting face oriented at an acute angle in relation to a horizontal plane, said coin sorting face including a plurality of coin sorting apertures of different sizes; and,

a plurality of coin tubes, each of which is in communication with a respective one of said plurality of coin sorting apertures, wherein said plurality of coin tubes is oriented approximately perpendicular to a plane of said wheel housing planar face.

59. (Previously Presented) A coin separating and sorting assembly

comprising:

a separating wheel including at least one coin receiving aperture; and,

a wheel housing on which said separating wheel is rotatably supported, said wheel housing including:

a first portion located in a first plane, said first portion being approximately

ring-shaped and including at least one coin sorting aperture, and

a second portion located in a second plane, spaced away from said first plane, said second portion being encircled by said first portion.

60. (Previously Presented) The assembly of claim 59 wherein said first portion comprises a plurality of coin sorting apertures of different sizes.

61. (Previously Presented) The assembly of claim 59 wherein said second plane is located above said first plane.

62. (Previously Presented) The assembly of claim 59 wherein said second portion is approximately circular.

63. (Previously Presented) The assembly of claim 59 wherein said wheel housing further comprises a flange located radially outwardly of said first portion and extending away from said first plane.

64. (Previously Presented) The assembly of claim 59 wherein said wheel housing further comprises a groove located between said first portion and said second portion, said groove accommodating a portion of said separating wheel.

65. (Previously Presented) A coin bank comprising:
a coin hopper;
a coin slide positioned below said coin hopper; and,

a coin separating and sorting assembly located between said coin hopper and said coin slide, said coin separating and sorting assembly comprising:

a separating wheel including at least one coin receiving aperture and a toroidal flange extending away from a face of said separating wheel wherein said toroidal flange fully encloses an outer perimeter of said at least one coin receiving aperture, and

a wheel housing on which said separating wheel is rotatably supported, said wheel housing being oriented at an acute angle in relation to a horizontal plane and including a plurality of coin sorting apertures of different sizes, said wheel housing including a lower section and an upper section, wherein said plurality of coin sorting apertures are located in said wheel housing upper section.

66. (Previously Presented) The bank of claim 65 wherein said separating wheel further comprises a second toroidal flange having a set of gear teeth.

67. (Previously Presented) The bank of claim 66 further comprising a motor having an output shaft operably connected to said gear teeth of said toroidal flange for driving the separating wheel.

68. (Previously Presented) The bank of claim 67 further comprising a gear train positioned between said output shaft and said gear teeth of said toroidal shaft, one gear of said gear train being fastened on said output shaft and another gear of said gear train engaging said gear teeth of said toroidal flange.

69. (Previously Presented) The bank of claim 66 wherein said wheel housing comprises a toroidal channel which includes an opening through which said gear teeth of said toroidal flange can be accessed.

70. (Previously Presented) A coin bank comprising:
a coin hopper;
a sorted coin container positioned below said coin hopper; and,
a coin separating and sorting assembly located between said coin hopper and said sorted coin container, said coin separating and sorting assembly comprising:
a ring-shaped separating wheel including at least one coin receiving aperture,
a wheel housing on which said separating wheel is rotatably supported, said wheel housing comprising a plurality of sorting apertures of different sizes, each aperture being sized to allow passage of an associated coin of a defined maximum diameter therethrough.

71. (Previously Presented) The bank of claim 70 wherein said wheel housing apertures are arranged in a size order.

72. (Previously Presented) The bank of claim 70 wherein at least one of said sorting apertures has a trailing edge with an angled surface.

73. (Previously Presented) The bank of claim 70 wherein said wheel housing further comprises a central portion located radially inwardly from said plurality of sorting

apertures, said central portion having a recessed area in an upper surface thereof.